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### **Natural Gas Leak Cause of Gloucester Explosion**

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan, Gloucester Fire Chief Barry McKay, and Gloucester Police Operations Commander Joseph F. Aiello have concluded their cause and origin investigation into the January 25, 2009 explosion at 76 Eastern Avenue, Gloucester. Investigators have concluded that the cause of the explosion was a natural gas leak from a break in the six-inch gas main in front of the residence. The leaking gas entered the home and was then ignited by any number of possible sources inside. The destruction was so severe that it is impossible to pinpoint the ignition source exactly.

The homeowner, Gloucester Police Officer Wayne Sargent, was seriously injured in the explosion that completely destroyed the home and damaged several adjacent homes on Eastern Avenue. Chief McKay said, "It is amazing that Officer Sargent survived this horrific explosion and all of his public safety colleagues wish him a speedy recovery."

The explosion was investigated by the Gloucester Fire Department, Gloucester Police Department and State Police assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal. The Department of Public Utilities is conducting its own parallel investigation and worked closely with the investigative team.

"Many people have been concerned that this incident and the recent Scituate home explosion were caused by similar circumstances. The circumstances surrounding these two explosions are completely different and unrelated. The Department of Fire Services has completed its investigation into the Scituate explosion and has forwarded those conclusions to the Plymouth District Attorney," said State Fire Marshal Coan.

"Remember, any time you smell gas inside your home, get outside and call the fire department," Coan added.

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